

Message Text

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ACTION BIB-01

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4916

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1889

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: RADIO LIBERTY

REF: STATE 053163

1. AS FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA WAS ILL ON HIS RETURN LAST WEEKEND FROM UK AND DENMARK VISITS AND HAS BEEN TIED UP EARLY THIS WEEK, I WAS NOT ABLE TO TALK WITH HIM UNTIL MARCH 10 REGARDING RADIO LIBERTY. AREILZA WILL BE GLAD TO SEE ABSIRE ON MARCH 18 OR 19 AND WE ARE NOW ARRANGING AN APPOINTMENT.

2. I TOLD AREILZA THAT I WAS NOT HAPPY WITH THE WAY IN WHICH GOS WAS DEALING WITH THE RADIO LIBERTY QUESTION. I HAD HAD CONTINUING CONTACTS BEGINNING LAST YEAR WITH THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT AND NOW THIS GOVERNMENT, BUT IN SPITE OF ASSURANCES THAT THE MATTER WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN A CLEAR POLICY POSITION REGARDING FUTURE OF RADIO LIBERTY. WHILE HE HAD AGREED NOT TO IMPLEMENT THE MARCH 23 CLOSURE DATE, I CONTINUED TO RECEIVE EVASIVE ANSWERS ABOUT FUTURE. I RE-EMPHASIZED TO AREILZA THE STRONG HIGH LEVEL INTEREST IN WASHINGTON ON THIS MATTER BOTH BY THE EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESS. I SAID THE PALS SITE WAS AN IMPORTANT INSTALLATION AND ONE FOR WHICH NO ALTERNATIVE COULD EASILY BE
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FOUND. I READ TO HIM SENATOR PERCY'S STATEMENT AT THE

RETIFICATION HEARING (STATE 052614) AND SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS LIKELY THAT ABSHIRE WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS THE RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT. AREILZA INQUIRED FOR HOW LONG AND I REPLIED FOR FIVE YEARS. HE SAID THIS WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

3. AREILZA THEN TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN CALLED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ON MARCH 9 TO EXPLAIN WHY RADIO LIBERTY WAS NOT BEING CLOSED ON MARCH 23 AS HAD BEEN DECIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER HAD INDICATED THAT A SPANIARD (WHOSE NAME AREILZA DID NOT REVEAL) HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS READY TO TAKE OVER RADIO LIBERTY INSTALLATION AS OF MARCH 23 AND THAT THIS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT WITH THE RADIO LIBERTY PEOPLE AT PALS. I TOLD AREILZA THIS WAS TOTAL NONSENSE AND HE AGREED. AREILZA WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE PROBLEMS OVER THE TREATY RATIFICATION HE HAD FELT IT WISER NOT TO ADHERE TO THE MARCH 23 CLOSURE.

4. AREILZA THEN SAID THAT HE WAS TROUBLED BY THE ESCALATING PRICE OF THE TREATY AS SENATORS CALLED FOR NPT RATIFICATION, RENEWAL OF RADIO LIBERTY CONTRACT AND A NUMBER OF OTHER MATTERS WHICH WERE NOT RELATED TO THE TREATY AT ALL. THIS WOULD HAVE A BAD EFFECT IN SPAIN AND WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE DEBATES IN THE CORTES. I TOLD AREILZA THAT I HAD TOLD HIM (AS HAD ALSO SENATOR PELL IN NPT) THAT THESE MATTERS WOULD BE BROUGHT UP IN THE SENATE AND THAT WE HAD NO CONTROL OVER THIS. MOREOVER, I HAD STRESSED TO HIM ON MANY OCCASIONS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RADIO LIBERTY QUESTION.

5. AREILZA INDICATED TO ME ONCE MORE THAT THE GOS COULD NOT AGREE TO A RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT. THERE WAS A STRONG FEELING THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO PHASE OUT RADIO LIBERTY. THE MOST THAT HE COULD OFFER WOULD BE AN EXTENSION BUT HE WOULD NOT BE PINNED DOWN ON A PERIOD OF TIME. I REPEATED TO HIM THAT HIS PROPOSAL OF A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND URGED HIM ONCE

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AGAIN TO RE-EXAMINE THIS WHOLE QUESTION SO THAT WHEN ABSHIRE CAME THERE COULD BE SOME MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION.

6. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR TO ME THAT WITHOUT A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE WHICH COULD BACKFIRE THE GOS IS SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO RENEW THE RADIO LIBERTY CONTRACT. MOREOVER, THERE APPEARS TO BE A VIEW WITHIN THE GOS THAT RADIO LIBERTY QUESTION SHOULD BE STRUNG OUT IN SOME MANNER UNTIL

AFTER THE TREATY IS RATIFIED AND THEN SEEK AN EARLY CLOSURE.
I PRESUME THAT IS WHY AREILZA HAS TALKED ABOUT A SIX-MONTH
EXTENSION. I STILL THINK WE CAN GET A LONGER EXTENSION BUT IT IS
CLEAR THAT THERE ARE BOTH STRONG POLITICAL AND PROBABLY
PRIVATE ECONOMIC INTERESTS SUPPORTING OUT RADIO LIBERTY
AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

7. IT IS OBIOUSLY WILL BE VERY USEFULL IF DURING THE
VISIT TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK OF AMBASSADOR AT LARGE
ROVIRA AND DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS
DURAN THEY ARE GIVEN EXPOSURE TO THE IMPORTANT WE
ATTACH TO RADIO LIBERTY. MY OWN FEELING IS THAT WE
OUGHT NOT TO PRESS FO AN EXTENSION OF THE CONTRACT
ALTHOUGH I FULLY UNDERSTANT THAT ABSHIRE WILL WISH
TO TAKE THIS UP WITH AREILZA. MY GUESS IS THAT WE
WILL FARE BETTER BY TRYING TO GET AS LONG AS EX-
TENSION AS POSSIBLE. AT THE MOMENT, PROSPECTS DO NOT
LOOK TOO BRIGHT FOR MUCH MORE THAN A YEAR.
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